

PROGRAM #23 - AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

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Augustus Saint-Gaudens, sculptor, was born in Dublin, Ireland, on Mar. 1, 1848, of French and Irish parents. Later that year the potato famine forced his family to emigrate to America, where they settled in New York City. Augustus was apprenticed at 13 in cameo-cutting, a trade that gave him mastery of sculpture in bas-relief. He was reared in Manhattan and learned drawing at Cooper Union and the National Academy of Design. At 19 he sailed for Europe, where he studied at the Beaux Arts, the best art school in Paris. He went to Rome in 1870, where, amid the sculptured grandeur left by the Italian Renaissance, he began his first full-figure statue. His subject was typically American: Hiawatha, lean and pensive, in a seated position. Completed in 1872, it stamped Saint-Gaudens as an artist of skill and originality.

In 1875 he returned to the United States and began a highly prolific artistic career. His statue of Admiral Farragut, unveiled in New York in 1881, revealed Saint-Gaudens as a leader in American art. His masterpieces include a standing figure of Abraham Lincoln in Chicago's Lincoln Park; a mysterious draped figure at Rock Creek cemetery, Washington, D.C., which symbolizes everlasting rest; and his famous equestrian statue of General Sherman, which stands at an entrance to New York's Central Park.

Saint-Gaudens, a member of the Legion of Honor and the Institute of France, died in Cornish, N.H., Aug. 3, 1907. He was a strong influence in developing American sculpture and, at the time of his death, the foremost master of his art in this country.